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FARM LABOR

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FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 48,000 for the week of July 6 through 12. Farmers hired 45,000 workers compared with 53,000 in April 2003 and 43,000 in July 2002. Agricultural services provided 3,000 paid workers, down 14,000 from last quarter, and down 1,000 from the number supplied a year ago. During the survey week scattered rains were concentrated over the western coast and inland Peninsula areas as Tropical Storm Claudette moved through the Gulf of Mexico. Most Panhandle, northern Peninsula and southeastern coast localities received only traces of rain for the week. Drying conditions allowed hay making to resume in some areas. Tobacco picking was active in preparation for the opening of contract collection centers in Madison and Live Oak on

July 23. Northern producers harvested vegetables for local sales. Watermelon and cantaloupe harvesting slowed as the season neared the end. Citrus producers mowed cover crops, sprayed for mite and other insect control and removed dead trees as needed.

The July all hired worker wage rate averaged \$9.53 per hour, fifty-five cents higher than the April 2003 wage of \$8.98, and ninety-eight cents above the \$8.55 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$9.55 per hour, sixty-nine cents above the \$8.86 paid in April, and \$1.07 higher than the \$8.48 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.25 per hour, fifteen cents below the \$9.40 paid in April, but equal to the July 2002 wage.

UNITED STATES

There were 1,273,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of July 6-12, 2003, up 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 953,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 320,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$8.88 per hour during the July 2003 reference week, up 31 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.18 per hour, up 28 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$8.62 per hour compared with \$8.38 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.28 per hour, was up 26 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.0 hours for hired workers during the survey week, unchanged from a year ago.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Northeast I (New England and New York), Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah) and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) regions. In the Pacific region, the Washington cherry harvest continued at peak levels much longer than normal, and ideal weather in Oregon allowed the cherry and raspberry harvests to progress rapidly. The cool, wet spring in the Northeast I region delayed planting of field and vegetable crops, which pushed many of the normal mid-June field activities into the survey reference week, resulting in an increased demand for field workers. Production of apricots and cherries in Utah was up considerably from the freeze-damaged 2002 production levels, and winter wheat harvest was in full swing in Colorado, which caused a greater need for hired workers in the Mountain II region. Dry, seasonable weather in Tennessee more than offset the persistent

wet conditions over much of Kentucky and West Virginia, causing more hired workers to be necessary in the Appalachian II region.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in California, the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) and Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) regions. In California, extreme heat during the two weeks prior to the reference week matured vegetables and strawberries rapidly, causing many fields to be harvested in order to minimize crop loss. Therefore, considerably fewer workers were needed during the reference week. In the Southern Plains, pasture grasses were plentiful in most areas, lessening the need for supplemental feeding and thereby reducing the demand for livestock workers. Also, scattered rains delayed vegetable harvest in east Texas, lowering the need for field workers. Rain and saturated soils kept field worker demand low in the Delta, Appalachian I and Corn Belt II regions, and poor drying conditions in the Delta region caused hay harvest to be delayed.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in Florida, and in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Mountain II, Delta and Southern Plains regions. The higher wages in Florida and the Lake region were mainly due to a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. Wages in the Mountain II region were higher due to the need for more skilled workers for the fruit harvest. The wet conditions in the Delta region kept wage rates higher due to the larger proportion of full time workers on the payroll. In the Southern Plains, there were more salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which led to higher average wages.

Table 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, July 6 - 12, 2003, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and survey week	Hired Workers							
	Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work			
	All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock	
		150 days or more	149 days or less					
HIRED BY FARMERS								
		Thousands		Hours	Dollars Per Hour ^{1/}			
2003								
	July 6 - 12	45.0	39.0	6.0	39.0	9.55	8.55	8.30
	April 6 - 12	53.0	42.0	11.0	38.3	8.86	8.05	8.10
	January 12 - 18	70.0	56.0	14.0	37.2	8.81	7.80	8.30
2002								
	October 6 - 12	57.0	51.0	6.0	38.9	8.67	7.50	8.60
	July 7 - 13	43.0	38.0	5.0	37.5	8.48	7.25	7.80
	April 7 - 13	52.0	46.0	6.0	40.6	8.57	7.75	7.50
	January 6 - 12	62.0	50.0	12.0	37.2	8.97	8.15	8.55
2001								
	October 7 - 13	51.0	44.0	7.0	41.8	8.84	7.70	8.00
	July 8 - 14	48.0	43.0	5.0	40.8	8.65	7.50	7.65
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2003								
	July 6 - 12	3.0			41.0	9.25		
	April 6 - 12	17.0			33.0	9.40		
	January 12 - 18	17.0			32.0	9.35		
2002								
	October 6 - 12	5.0			31.5	9.00		
	July 7 - 13	4.0			42.5	9.25		
	April 7 - 13	11.0			34.0	9.00		
	January 6 - 12	19.0			38.5	8.25		
2001								
	October 7 - 13	5.0			34.0	8.70		
	July 8 - 14	2.0			43.5	9.54		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2003								
	July 6 - 12	48.0				9.53		
	April 6 - 12	70.0				8.98		
	January 12 - 18	87.0				8.90		
2002								
	October 6 - 12	62.0				8.69		
	July 7 - 13	47.0				8.55		
	April 7 - 13	63.0				8.63		
	January 6 - 12	81.0				8.80		
2001								
	October 7 - 13	56.0				8.83		
	July 8 - 14	50.0				8.69		

^{1/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**Table 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,
selected States, July 6 - 12, 2003, with comparisons ^{1/}**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
Thousands						
All hired workers						
July 6-12, 2003	45	235	61	18	7	953
April 6 - 12, 2003	53	220	49	16	7	781
July 7 - 13, 2002	43	280	74	17	7	1,006
Expected to work						
150 days or more						
July 6-12, 2003	39	203	49	16	6	678
April 6 - 12, 2003	42	185	38	15	6	619
July 7 - 13, 2002	38	230	55	14	6	723
149 days or less						
July 6-12, 2003	6	32	12	2	1	275
April 6 - 12, 2003	11	35	11	1	1	162
July 7 - 13, 2002	5	50	19	3	1	283
Dollars per hour ^{3/}						
All hired worker wage rate						
July 6-12, 2003	9.55	9.23	8.15	8.07	11.25	8.88
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.86	9.22	8.31	7.93	11.50	9.16
July 7 - 13, 2002	8.48	8.87	7.53	8.03	11.29	8.57
Wages by type of worker						
Field & Livestock						
July 6-12, 2003	8.51	8.61	7.60	7.55	9.55	8.28
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.06	8.48	7.75	7.52	9.63	8.49
July 7 - 13, 2002	7.38	8.32	7.14	7.43	9.67	8.02
Field						
July 6-12, 2003	8.55	8.47	7.62	7.11	9.55	8.18
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.05	8.33	7.62	7.10	9.58	8.40
July 7 - 13, 2002	7.25	8.18	7.06	7.15	9.65	7.90
Livestock						
July 6-12, 2003	8.30	9.94	7.58	8.41	^{4/}	8.62
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.10	10.15	7.98	8.24	^{4/}	8.75
July 7 - 13, 2002	7.80	9.65	7.23	8.11	^{4/}	8.38
Average hours per week						
Hours worked by all hired workers						
July 6-12, 2003	39.0	46.1	38.2	47.7	36.7	40.0
April 6 - 12, 2003	38.3	43.1	40.7	47.3	35.6	40.1
July 7 - 13, 2002	37.5	46.0	39.7	42.8	38.0	40.0

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States excludes Alaska.

^{3/} Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

RELIABILITY OF FARM LABOR ESTIMATES

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was July 6-12, 2003.

RELIABILITY: Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative

sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 7 and 19 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 1.0 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 7 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 1 and 24 percent at the regional level.

Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

REVISION POLICY: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for July 2002 and April 2003 were subject to revision with this report. If any revisions were made to previous data, they are reprinted in this report for your information, and they are identified as such.

NEXT FARM LABOR PUBLICATION DATE: The November 21st report will have information for the survey week of October 12-18, 2003. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the regional and U.S. levels. The wage rates for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.